

**BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS**  
President Rose

You are almost there!

Let me begin by acknowledging what we all know: the past two plus years have been historic in the challenges they have presented to the world, our country, Bowdoin, and to each of you and



The harsh reality is that the most important problems we face share common characteristics:

- The work is hard. The path is long. There will be failure.
- Symbolic or vanity projects are always offered they are less hard, short-term, and victory can be declared more easily. They only problem is that they have almost no substantial impact on the actual problem. Do not get distracted by that shiny new object, stay. Stay firmly focused on the prize, solving the problem in a real way.
- Institutions of every stripe need to be engaged government, NGO, business, educational, civic, and so forth. The tired, counterproductive battle lines need to be thrown out and there needs to be a fresh take on who must be engaged and in what ways.
- Compromise will be essential. Sadly, compromise has become a dirty word happening. Many are not really interested in change, only in scoring points.
- And, you will be criticized for being wrong, for not being righteous enough, for being too slow, for being too fast, and so forth. Learn to deal with it.

And remember, the work is hard, the path is long, there will be failure.

But be undaunted.

As Admiral Stockdale said, you must also have faith. The faith that you will prevail.

Why should you have faith? These problems are really hard. Really hard.

Because change does happen. In my lifetime I have seen change for the better regarding many of our biggest problems. It is possible. Some days it seems like two steps forward and one step back, or maybe three steps back, and some days it is, but. But change can happen, and it does. And it is driven by those who understand the realities that I described. Let the reality of these challenges steel

And I have faith because of you. What you are capable of has been on full display over the last four years, and each of you is nothing short of amazing and inspiring.

With a steely-eyed grasp